



Honor Sacrifice Service

## NEWS RELEASE

### VFW Announces National Essay Contest Winner

*Kansas City, Mo.* -- The Veterans of Foreign Wars is pleased to announce that Julia Benbrook, an eighth grade student at Woodward Middle School in South Woodward, Okla., is the first place winner and recipient of a \$10,000 savings bond for writing the winning essay in the 2008-2009 Patriot's Pen essay contest. Julia, who was sponsored by VFW Post 1335 and Ladies Auxiliary in Woodward, wrote her winning essay based on this year's theme, "Why America's Veterans Should Be Honored."

As the first place winner, Julia will receive her award at a special luncheon on April 7 during the VFW Voice of Democracy and Legislative Conference held in Washington, DC.

The youth essay writing contest is a nationwide competition that gives students in grades 6, 7 and 8 the opportunity to write a 300-400 word theme-based essay expressing their views on democracy.

Over 140,000 students participated in the competition this year. The 53 finalists -- one from each of the 51 VFW departments and one each from the two overseas Departments (Pacific Areas and Europe) competed at the national level for individual U.S. Savings Bonds ranging from \$1,000 to \$10,000. In all, the VFW awarded \$91,000 in bonds to the top 45 national finalists.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. is a nonprofit veterans' service organization composed of combat veterans and those who currently serve on active duty or in the Guard and Reserves. Founded in 1899 and chartered by Congress in 1936, the VFW is the nation's largest organization of war veterans and is one of its oldest veterans' organizations. With 2.2 million members located in 7,800 VFW Posts worldwide, the VFW and its Auxiliaries are dedicated to "*honor the dead by helping the living*" through veterans service, legislative initiatives, youth scholarships, Buddy Poppy and national military service programs. Annually, the VFW and its Auxiliaries contribute more than 13 million hours of community service to the nation. For more information or to join, visit the organization's Web site at [www.vfw.org](http://www.vfw.org).

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